



# *American Academy of Dermatology Association*

November 18, 2003

Dear Member of Congress:

The 14,000-member American Academy of Dermatology Association supports passage of the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act and urges you to vote for this historic legislation.

In addition to including a prescription drug benefit for seniors and much-needed reforms to the Medicare program, the legislation includes a 1.5% increase in Medicare physician reimbursement for 2004 and 2005 instead of the currently scheduled 4.5% cut in 2004. This will help to insure patient access to the medical care they need.

The bill also contains a number of other provisions of importance to dermatologists and their patients:

- Regulatory reforms of benefit to Medicare providers
- Expansion of the availability of medical savings accounts for beneficiaries
- An increase in Medicare payments for drugs administered in a physician's office

Finally, the bill does **not** include provisions in earlier versions of the Medicare reform legislation which the AADA asked to be removed:

- An electronic prescribing mandate was changed to a voluntary electronic prescribing measure
- A proposal to impose a 20 percent beneficiary co-payment for laboratory services was removed
- A proposal to impose a complex new way of coding was deleted from the legislation

While the 1.5% increase in 2004 and 2005 is much better than the expected 4.5% cut in 2004, it still does not address the long-term flaws in the formula for determining Medicare physician reimbursement. If the flaws in the formula are not fixed before 2006, we will face continued severe cuts in physician reimbursement, with devastating impact on patients ability to get the medical care they need. The AADA, along with the Alliance of Specialty Medicine, looks forward to working with you to resolve this issue for the long-term so that we do not need to approach the Congress and the Administration every year asking for a short-term fix.

Please contact Laura Saul Edwards, Assistant Director, Federal Affairs, should you have any questions or comments at [ledwards@aad.org](mailto:ledwards@aad.org) or 202/842-3555.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Raymond L. Cornelison, Jr., M.D.  
President, American Academy of Dermatology Association